Pocket PC 2002: First Encounter

By Douglas Dedo

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Out of the box

Congratulations on your smart purchase of a new Pocket PC! You've probably already had a chance to juice the battery up, take the applications for a spin, and perhaps even enter some data. Now you're wondering what you may have missed. There are many different ways to customize the Pocket PC. Having had a chance to use the Pocket PC 2002 software during its development, here are some of the steps I follow when setting up a new Pocket PC fresh out of the box. Hopefully it will illuminate at least one new feature for you, or remind you later how to quickly change a setting, and make your Pocket PC experience even better.

Personalize

The Pocket PC comes with a generic name "Pocket_PC" and if you don't change this before your device and PC bond in the ActiveSync® experience, you will see this name on the sync file folder on your PC desktop as well as every time you are synchronizing your device. Here are the steps to personalize the name of your device to something that makes you smile every time you sync:

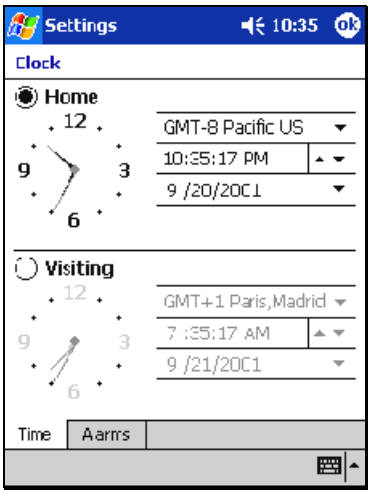
- Tap **Start** (or **Flag** in top left corner)
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap **System** tab
- Tap the **About** icon
- Tap **Device ID** tab

Whatever name you choose, be sure to ***use no spaces***. Place an underline character where you want to create a space between words.

Time and Date

The quick process to set the device up doesn't include setting the time or date. To quickly get to this setting

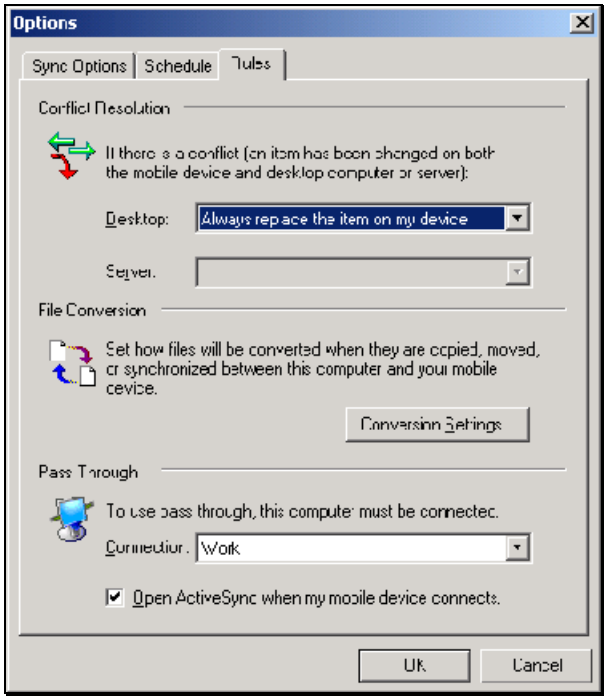
- Get to the Today Page (Tap **Start**, **Today**)
- Tap on the Date, just below the Start bar, which brings up the Clock Settings page
- Use the arrows to set the correct time and date



Introduce Your Pocket PC To Your PC

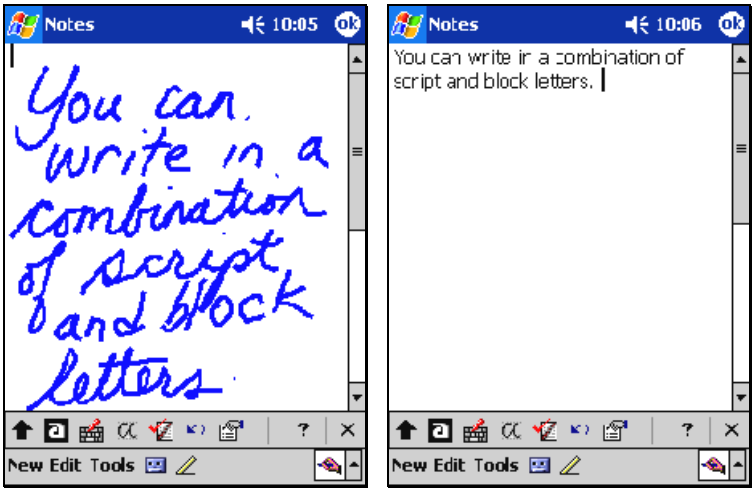
Wow, has ActiveSync become really easy to install and use. Now that your device is personalized and the serial connection speed is maximized, insert your ActiveSync 3.5 CD into your desktop PC and follow the on-screen directions to create a Partnership. The latest version of ActiveSync technology can also be found on the Microsoft Web site (www.microsoft.com/mobile/downloads).

Once the partnership is established, I click the **Options** icon on the ActiveSync window on the desktop PC. Then I click the **Rules** tab and select the **Conflict Resolution** option "Always replace the item on my device." This helps to reduce conflicts that Outlook® creates when you dismiss calendar appointments on both the PC and the Pocket PC. Buyer beware: if you do make a change to the same item, like a Contact or Word document, on both the PC and the Pocket PC, the next time you sync the PC copy will overwrite the Pocket PC copy.



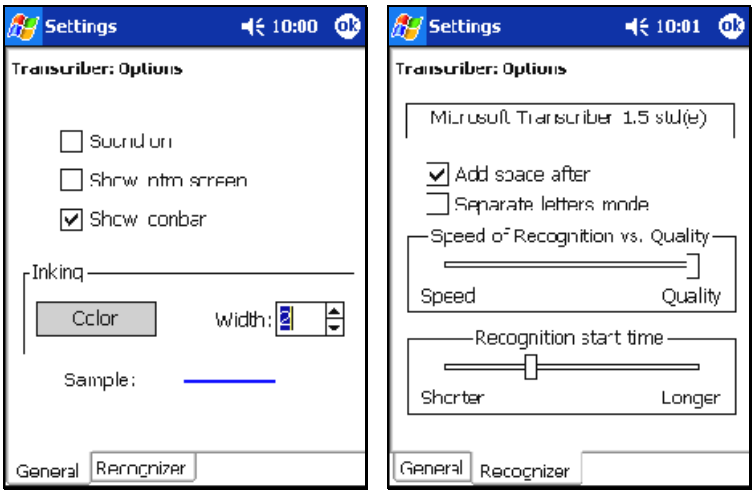
Write Full Sentences

I have found the handwriting recognition software, Transcriber, a great way to enter data into the Pocket PC. The Transcriber software on Pocket PC 2002 has increased the accuracy of its recognition. Now you don't have to write one character at a time. You can write anywhere on the screen just like you do on a piece of paper, and when you stop writing Transcriber converts all of it to text.

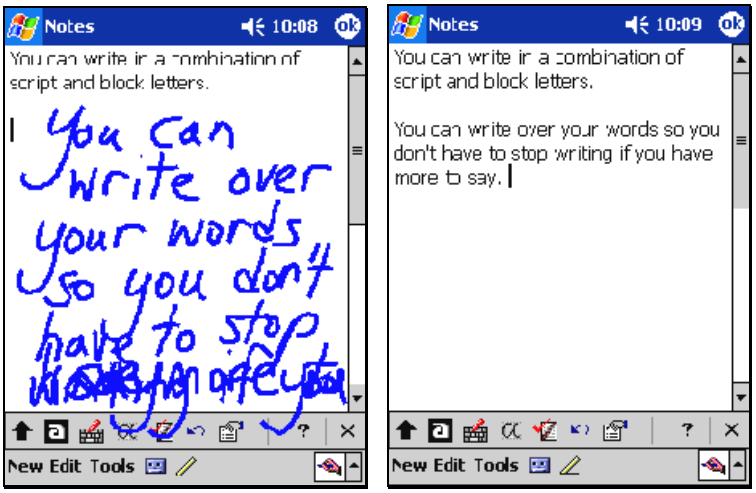


I fine-tune some of Transcriber's default settings to improve the experience even further. To increase the accuracy:

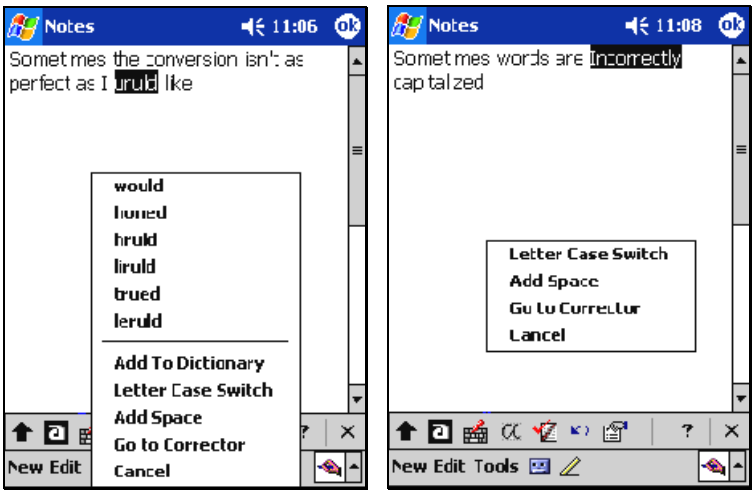
- Go to an application window that requires data input – I typically use the **Notes** application. Select the **Transcriber** data input option in the bottom right corner. Then tap on the arrow in the bottom right corner and tap on **Options…**
- Tap on the **Options** button at the top right
- Un-check the **Sound on** option and change the **Width** to "2"
- Then tap on the **Recognizer** tab and slide the "Speed of Recognition vs. Quality" bar to the far right
- Tap **OK** in the top right corner twice to return to the Notes application



You can write as long as you want on the screen and Transcriber will convert everything to text.

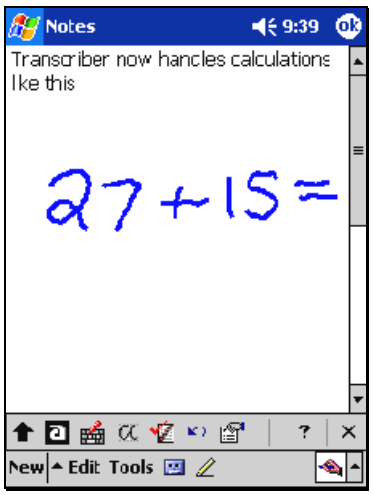


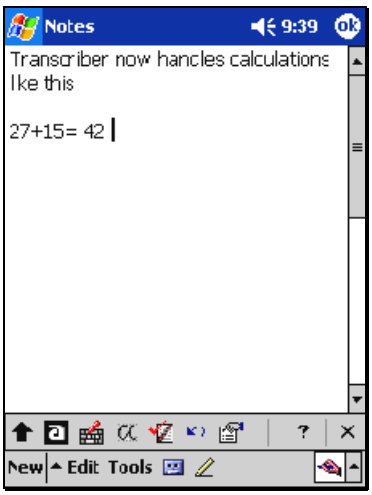
Sometimes Transcriber doesn't get it all right. You can double tap a misspelled word to select it and do a down and up swish to bring up a list of alternative spellings. Similarly you can now switch the case of the first letter of the word if it is incorrectly capitalized using the same pop up menu. Tap the "**?**" help key on the Transcriber Icon bar to see a list of Gestures including Enter, Space, Copy, Paste, and Capitalize.



The Transcriber icon bar is a useful tool. The arrow at the left of the icon bar shows which way the screen should be oriented when you're writing words. If you want to impress your friends, tap on the arrow until it points down and then write on the screen upside down (facing them) and watch the characters be converted to text before their eyes. This could also be a useful communication tool for someone who can't speak. If you're trying to enter a lot of numbers and Transcriber is not cooperating, Tap on the "a" (just to the right of the arrow) twice. You should see the "a" turn to an "A" (optimize for capital characters) and then to "12" (optimize for numbers). When you're done entering numeric data, don't forget to switch back to the little "a" or you'll see amazing gibberish the next time you write a word. Tap on the keyboard icon next to the little "a" and you'll have an easy way to enter punctuation.

One useful new feature in Pocket PC 2002 is to be able to write equations on the screen and have Transcriber do the calculation providing the answer with the resolved text. It uses Pocket Excel in the background to perform the calculations.

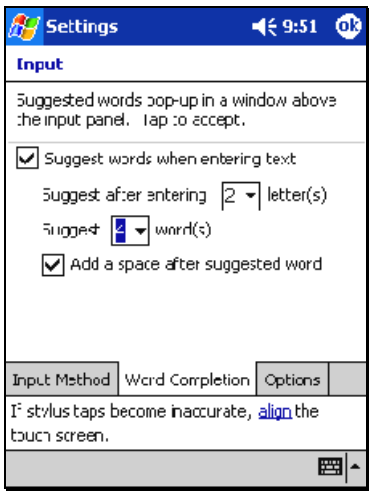


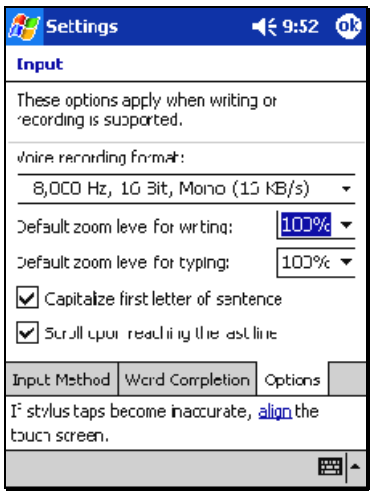


Soft Input Panel Options

There are some useful changes you can make to customize how you enter data into the device. The soft input panel comes with four options out of the box, Letter Recognizer for converting individual characters to text, Block Recognizer which recognizes characters familiar to users of Graffiti, Transcriber handwriting recognition, and Keyboard which is the ultimate hunt and peck experience. If you can type faster than your write, there are real keyboards available for some models you can hook up to your Pocket PC from Hewlett-Packard (www.hp.com/jornada/products/520/acc_keyboard.html), iBIZ Technology Corp (www.ibizcorp.com/pda_accessories/pda_keysync.html), Think Outside (www.thinkoutside.com/products.asp), and others.

- Go anywhere except the **Today Page** (e.g., Tap **Start**, **Notes**)
- Tap the little triangle (up arrow head) in the bottom right corner
- Tap **Options…**
- Select the **Keyboard Input** method
- If you would like a bigger target when tapping on the keyboard, select **Large** keys
- Tap **Word Completion** tab
- Change the number of words it suggests to 4 words (this will reduce keyboard tapping and character writing especially for the long words)
- Tap **Options** tab
- You can play around with the different voice recording formats to hear which works best on your device, but I've found the combination of quality and space utilization that works for me is the setting "8,000 Hz, 16 Bit, Mono (16 KB/s)"
- I set the defaults for both writing and typing zoom level to 100%





Return To Owner

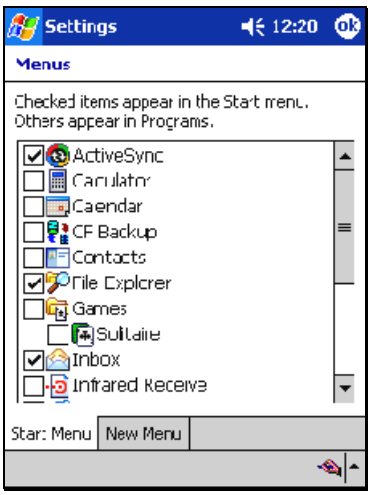
It would be a shame to misplace your new Pocket PC and not get it back because someone couldn't figure out who it belonged to. You should quickly insert the owner info.

- Get to the **Today Page**
- Tap on the band where it says "Tap here to set owner information" just under the date.
- Fill in the fields and if you have a password set (or plan to set a password) check the box to "Show information when device is turned on"

Optimize The Start Menu, and the New Menu

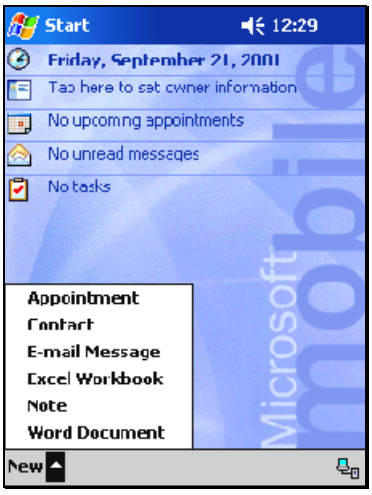
When you tap the Start button, a long list of default selections drops down. You may find that there are some applications you don't use in that list and some you would like to add. This will ensure that you are only two taps away from the applications you use the most. Note that the task switcher bar is at the top of the **Start Menu** and displays the icons of the last six applications you have used. To change the list of applications on the **Start Menu**:

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap the **Menus** icon
- Check or uncheck the application boxes as desired. If you check more than 8, you run the risk of the Start Menu not fitting on the screen. I check these applications: ActiveSync, File Explorer, Inbox, Internet Explorer, MSN® Messenger, Terminal Server Client, and Windows Media™ 8.



There is another feature hidden in the **Start Menu**, the **New Menu**. This **New Menu** cuts down the steps required to enter data into the device. You can create new appointments, contacts, e-mail messages, and more by tapping on the "New" word in the bottom left corner of the screen (when you're not in the Settings or Programs sections). If you're in an application, like Notes, you can Tap the little triangle next to "New" and create new items besides a new Note. To turn this little triangle (up arrow head) option on:

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap the **Menus** icon
- Tap the **New Menu** tab
- Check the box "Turn on the New button menu"
- Uncheck any items you don't plan to use

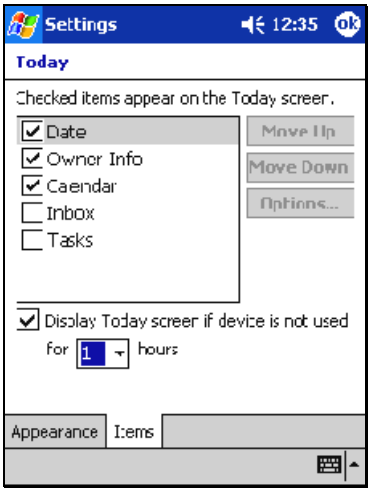


Jump To Today

The Today Page (like the desktop screen on the PC) is a good starting point on the Pocket PC. A single tap on any of the bars in the middle of the screen jumps you right to that application to see the details. Since all roads lead from Today, there is a setting that automatically jumps the device back to the Today Page when it hasn't been used within that time limit.

- Tap the **Start** button
- Tap **Settings**

- Tap the **Today** icon
- Tap the **Items** tab
- Check or uncheck those items you want displayed on the **Today Page**
- Select “1” hour in the bottom field
- Tap **OK**

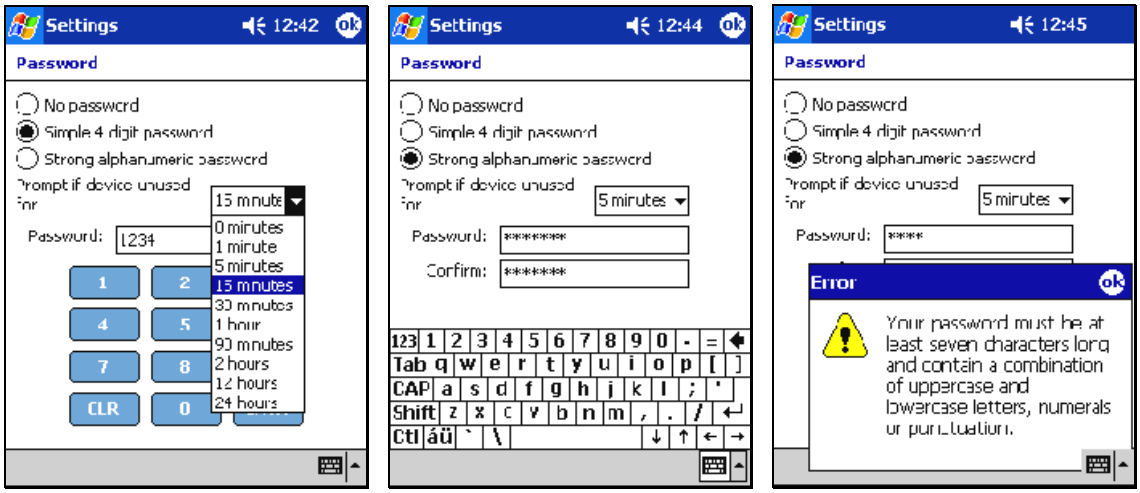


You may have noticed the Appearance tab. This enables you to choose different skins to customize the look and feel of your Today page. A number of different skins should be available to download from the Microsoft Web site. You also have the option to use one of your own personal pictures as the background to the Today page.

Secure Your Data With A Password

If you’re putting any sensitive data on the device (e.g., credit card numbers, social security numbers, job-related confidential data, etc.) it’s a wise idea to set a device password that automatically activates when you turn off the device. A couple of new options are available now so that you can choose between a 4-digit PIN or a stronger alphanumeric password. A time delay option is now available so that you can set how long your password stays active once you turn off your device. In meetings this is very helpful so that you don’t have to enter your password every time you turn the device on.

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap the **Password** icon
- Choose the type of password, the actual password, and the time you want the device to wait before activating the password after the device has been turned off.
- Tap **OK**.



If you forget your password, your only option is to do a hard reset on the device. Then you can go back to the top of this document and start all over again. The good news is that if you've been syncing regularly, most of your data should be safely stored on the PC or an Exchange server.

It is recommended that you not place corporate network logon passwords on the Pocket PC. If your device is stolen and your network password is on the device, your IT group isn't going to be happy with you if something happens to their network with your device.

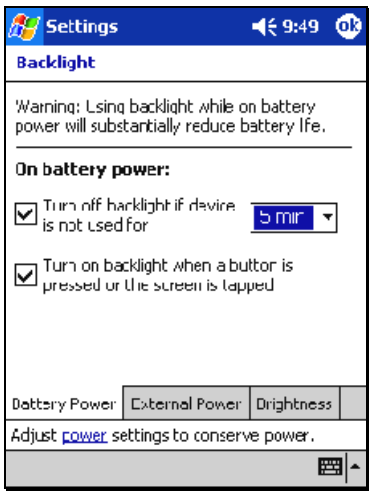
If you're interested in learning more about security options for the Pocket PC, check out the document titled *Pocket PC Security* [www.microsoft.com/mobile/enterprise/papers/security.asp]

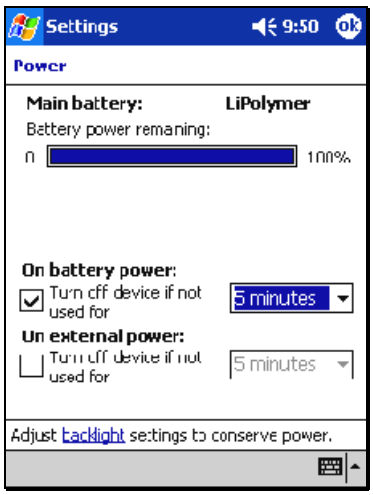
Keep The Light On

The default backlight setting is designed to preserve battery life. I've found the battery life on the Pocket PC is good enough now I don't worry about the backlight running longer. I do find it irritating if the light goes off when I'm doing a demonstration or taking notes in a meeting. Here are the steps to maximize the time the backlight and the device stay on.

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap the **System** tab
- Tap the **Backlight** icon

  On battery power I set the "Turn off backlight if device is not used for" 5 minutes. If this still isn't long enough for you, you can uncheck this option altogether.
- Tap the "**power**" link at the bottom of the screen
- To keep the device on longer, select "On battery power: Turn off device if not used for" 5 minutes or uncheck this option.

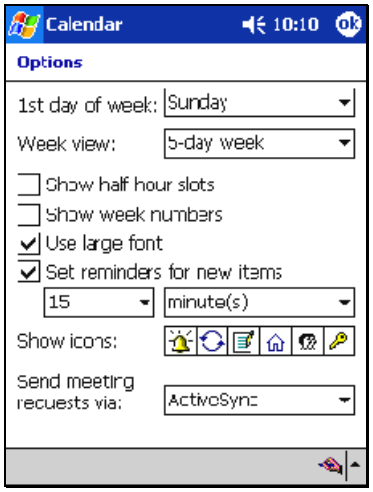


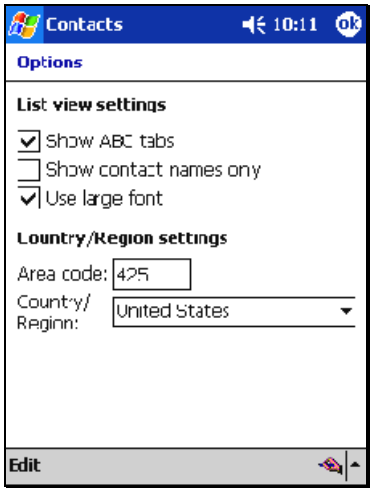


All the better to see you with

I like to use the larger character fonts to view my calendar appointments and contacts. To get to this optional setting:

- Get to the **Calendar** and **Contacts** applications
- Tap on the **Tools** pop-up menu
- Tap **Options…**
- Check the box “Use large font”



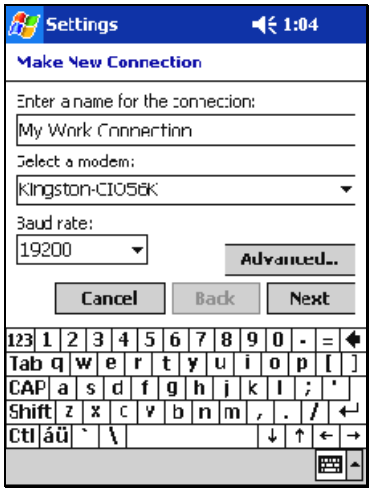


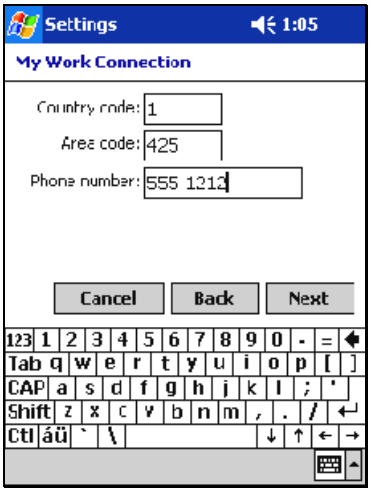
Dial-up Connections

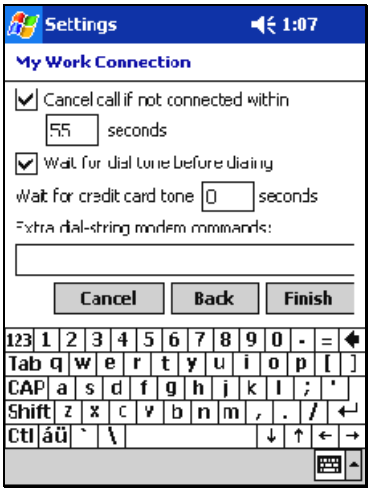
If you have a 56KB Modem card from a company like PreTec (www.pretec.com/2sec_compactmodemb.htm) or Kingston (www.kingston.com/compactio/CIO56K.asp) or a Socket Communications Digital Phone Card (www.socketcom.com/product/dpc.htm) so your cell phone becomes a modem for your Pocket PC, here is where you can set up the dial-up connection.

- Place the modem in the device
- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**

- Tap the **Connections** tab
- Tap the **Connections** icon
- If you are going to be dialing into an ISP, tap the upper **Modify** button, otherwise if you're dialing into a network at work then tap the lower **Modify** button
- Tap **New…** in the center window of the **Modem** tab
- Use the default settings (ensure the "Select a modem" field has your modem listed) and leave the **Baud Rate** set to 19200 (the Pocket PC software will use the fastest baud rate possible anyway)
- Tap **Next** button
- Enter the phone number (you don't need to put in the dash, but it doesn't hurt if you do)
- Change "120" seconds" to "55" seconds unless you like waiting a long time for a phone call to time out that isn't getting a good connection
- Tap the **Finish** button



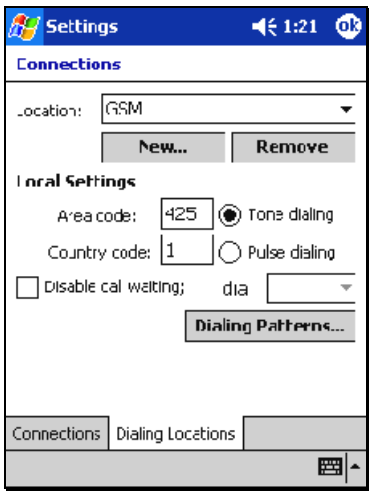


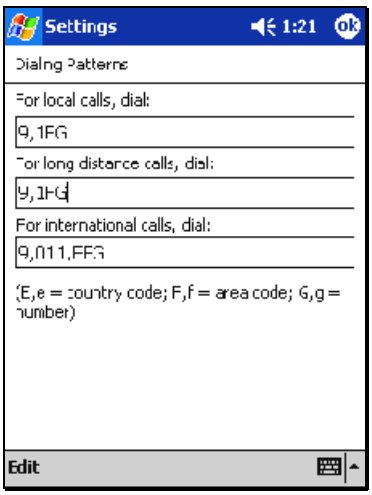


- If you use different connectivity options, should you be so lucky to have different CompactFlash cards, you should double check that the "Select a modem:" field is set up with the current card you have installed. In this screen you can see the setting by just tapping on the Connection you just made.

Socket Digital Phone Card users should not only check that the "Select a modem:" field is correct, but also set up a Dialing Pattern that works when using your cell phone outside your home area.

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Settings**
- Tap the **Connections** tab
- Tap the **Connections** icon
- Tap the **Dialing Locations** tab
- Tap the **New…** button
- Enter a New location name (I identify the type of cell phone I'm using such as SprintPCS or GSM)
- Tap the **Dialing Patterns…** button
- Make sure the "local calls" field is the same as the "long distance calls" field (e.g., 1FG)





If you have a special keyboard driver installed, that can take over the port that is needed for a dial-up connection. If you don't know how to turn off the driver (usually an option when you tap on the keyboard icon on the **Today Page**), press the soft reset button on the Pocket PC to turn of the driver. Then check that the "Select a modem:" field matches the card you wish to use and the dialing pattern is set to the right option.

While some Pocket PCs will include wireless connectivity (For example, one of more of these technologies: Bluetooth, Infrared, 802.11b, and GSM/GPRS) built into the device, a number of wireless options are only available via a separately purchased modem and/or other wireless accessories. For more information about wired and wireless connectivity options for Pocket PCs, visit the *Mobile Device Wireless Connectivity* page [www.microsoft.com/mobile/enterprise/papers/wireless.asp]**.**

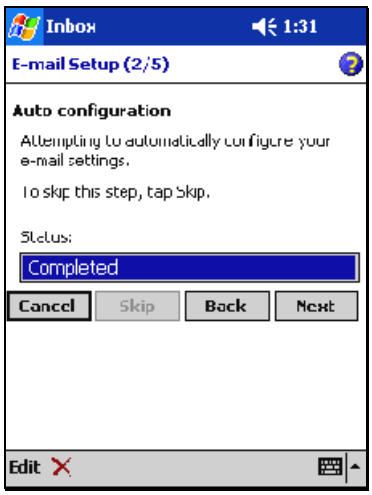
Got Mail?

The Pocket PC can get email directly from an email server using the IMAP4 protocol (without having to go through the desktop PC). If you need to have your IT folks turn this option on, point them to this *Mobile E-mail Access for the Enterprise* Web page for instructions (www.microsoft.com/mobile/enterprise/papers/mblmail.asp). If you use the IMAP4 option to sync, turn off ActiveSync email so you don't get two complete sets of email on your device. You can clear the email on your device without deleting it by

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Inbox**
- Tap the **Services** pop-up menu at the bottom of the screen
- Tap **Clear All**

To set up the device for direct IMAP4 email synchronization

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Inbox**
- Tap the **Services** pop-up menu
- Tap **New Service…** and work through the 5 steps. The Pocket PC 2002 attempts to automatically configure as many email settings as it can figure out.



- Tap the **Tools** pop-up menu in Inbox and select **Options…**
- Tap the **Message** tab
- Check the Indent box and uncheck “Add leading character:” box based on your favorite options
- Check “Keep copy of sent mail in Sent folder” or you will not have a record of email sent from the Pocket PC (since it goes out through a different SMTP channel than your email server)
- In the “Empty deleted items:” field select “On connect/disconnect”

- Connect to your corporate network via a low-power Ethernet card from companies like PreTec, Socket, or Xircom or with a dial-up connection.
- In the Inbox application tap the **Services** pop-up menu
- Tap **Connect** (or just tap the **Connect** icon to the right of **Services** on the menu bar)
- When the initial email sync is done you can have different folders set up for offline viewing by taping the “Inbox – down arrow head” just below the Start button at the top, tapping the folder name, tapping **Services** pop-up menu, and taping “Folder Available Offline”
- When done syncing, tap the **Connect** icon again

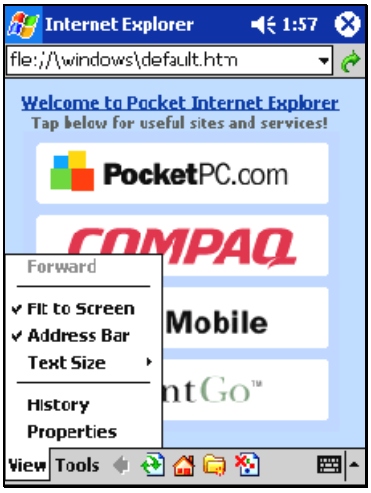
If you like to sync directly to an Exchange server and want your email as well as your calendar and contacts, the new Microsoft Mobile Information Server provides a secure way to do that. If you have a need for more difference types of data or sources such as Tasks, Domino, or relational databases there are a number of enterprise ISVs with server sync options that are listed in the Enterprise Solutions list. Visit this Web site, www.microsoft.com/mobile/enterprise/solutions/swsol.asp, select the “Server Synchronization” category and then click the **Search Now** button. Other related categories include

“Synchronize” and “Lotus Notes Sync.” Getting access to e-mail may require a separately purchased modem and/or other wired or wireless accessories. Contact your Pocket PC device manufacturer for details.

Web Surfing

Accessing full Web pages with Internet Explorer on the Pocket PC comes in really handy. Connecting to the Internet may require a separately purchased modem and/or other wired or wireless accessories. Contact your Pocket PC device manufacturer for details. These are the options I choose when setting up a device for the first time.

- Tap **Start**
- Tap **Internet Explorer**
- Tap the **View** pop-up menu
- Tap **Address Bar** so you can enter your favorite web site names
- Unchecking **Fit to Screen** in the **View** pop-up menu may make some sites that use a lot of frames easier to read but may require more left-right scrolling. So normally I keep this useful option checked.



Up And Running

Hopefully these steps have helped you get up and running faster so you can enjoy your Pocket PC more.

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